

Program Project Description:

The Interim Federal Action Plan (“Interim Plan”) for the California Bay-Delta, issued in December 2009, signaled the federal government’s intent to protect and restore this critically important ecosystem – one that provides water to 25 million residents, sustains one of the most productive agricultural sectors in the country, and until recently supported a commercial and recreational fishing industry that normally contributed hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the California economy. The Interim Plan contained four cross-cutting federal priorities: 1) work in closer partnership with the State of California and local authorities to ensure smarter water use and restore healthy ecosystems; 2) encourage smarter supply and use of Bay-Delta water; 3) work in a focused and expedited manner to address the degraded Bay-Delta Ecosystem; and 4) help deliver drought relief services and ensure integrated Bay-Delta flood risk management. The Department of the Interior and the Council on Environmental Quality co-chair the Federal Leadership Committee for the Bay-Delta, which oversees implementation of the Interim Plan. Other member agencies are the Departments of Commerce, Agriculture, the Army (Civil Works), and EPA. Each of these Departments and their agencies are responsible for commitments under the Interim Plan.

Improving water supply reliability and restoration of threatened and listed species remain the priority. The federal government is participating with the State of California and stakeholders in the development of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP), a long-term plan for ecosystem restoration and water management. In addition, over the past two years, the Obama Administration has recognized that despite the careful planning for the BDCP, more immediate actions are needed to address the California water crisis. EPA, for example, in an effort to assess the effectiveness of current water quality programs in the Bay-Delta and its tributaries, issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in 2011 focusing on water quality impacts to Bay-Delta aquatic life from pollutants such as ammonia, selenium, pesticides, emerging contaminants and water quality factors (such as salinity and temperature) that restrict estuarine habitat and fish migration.

EPA has a diverse and active history of working with state, federal and other stakeholders throughout the entire estuary to protect water quality and ecosystem health. Currently, EPA’s highest program priority¹ is working with State water quality agencies to ensure water quality standards in the Delta are sufficiently protective and are consistently implemented.

FY 2013 Activities and Performance Plan:

In FY 2013, the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary program will focus on the following activities, most of which (the first seven) support Goal 3 of the Interim Federal Action Plan — Addressing the Degraded Bay-Delta Ecosystem:

- Participate in a state/federal partnership to balance the competing water needs between agriculture, urban uses and the environment, especially the Agency commitments in the Interim Federal Action Plan of December 2009;

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- Improve the effectiveness of Clean Water Act programs to restore water quality and protect wetlands and streams in the Bay Delta watershed, following up on the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking related to Bay Delta Estuary water quality issued in 2011;
- Support the California Water Boards in implementing their Bay Delta Strategic Plan, particularly reviewing/improving Delta water quality standards;
- Work with the state-federal partnership to establish a regional water quality monitoring and assessment program for the Delta and its tributaries, integrating the information needs of all agencies in a more efficient and effective system;
- Provide scientific support to further the understanding of the Bay Delta ecosystem collapse, especially the causes and methods for reversing the decline of pelagic organisms and salmonids in the Delta, focusing on factors related to contaminants and estuarine water quality.

Provide technical support to the Bureau of Reclamation's program to restore the health of the San Joaquin River (San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, Public Law 111-11).

- Support activities that predict, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change on the Bay Delta watershed;
- Support restoration of streams and wetlands and the development of measures to minimize the methylation of mercury in wetlands;
- Continue a competitive grant program to implement projects that improve water quality and restore habitat in San Francisco Bay watersheds; and
- Strengthen ongoing implementation of the San Francisco Estuary Partnership's CCMP by supporting a new strategic plan. Encourage focus on reducing urban runoff impacts on water quality through watershed planning, Low Impact Development (LID) and TMDL implementation;

Performance Targets:

Work under this program supports the Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems objective. Currently, there are no performance measures for this specific program.

FY 2013 Change from FY 2012 President's Budget (Dollars in Thousands):

Statutory Authority:

Clean Water Act (CWA).